

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Roy L. Masinton, Malheur Resource Area Manager, Bureau of Land Management, 100 Oregon Street, Vale, Oregon 97918, Telephone (541) 473-3144.

**Roy L. Masinton,**

*Malheur Resource Area Manager.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[CA-067-1990; CA-40204]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Proposed Expansion of an Existing Gold Mining/Processing Operation

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management.

**ACTION:** Notice of intent.

**SUMMARY:** Newmont Gold Company (NGC), operator of the Mesquite gold mine located in Imperial County, California, has proposed to expand mining operations by a plan modification submitted to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), El Centro field office, on November 30, 1998. Pursuant to Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the BLM will direct the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) by a third party contractor on the impacts of an expansion of this gold mining/processing operation. Comments are being requested to help identify significant issues or concerns related to the proposed action, to determine the scope of the issues (including alternatives) that need to be analyzed, and to eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not significant. Supporting documentation should be included with comments recommending that the EIS address specific environmental issues. Public scoping meetings will be held (see below).

**DATES:** For scoping meetings and comments: Three public scoping meetings will be held during 1999 on the following dates and locations: January 26, from 7-10 pm, at the Best Western Yuma Inn Suites, Palm Canyon Room, 1450 Castle Dome Ave., Yuma, Az. ph (520) 783-8341; January 27, from 7-10 pm, at the El Centro Community Center, 375 South First Street, El Centro, Ca. ph (760) 337-4555; and January 28, from 7-10 pm, at San Diego State University, Aztec Center-Backdoor Room, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego, Ca. ph (619) 594-5278. Written

comments must be postmarked no later than Monday, February 8, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments should be addressed to the Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, El Centro Field Office, 1661 South 4th Street, El Centro, California 92243, ATTN: Geologist.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kevin Marty, Bureau of Land Management, El Centro Field Office, 1661 South 4th Street, El Centro, California 92243, (760) 337-4400.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This Mesquite Mine began operations under an approved plan of operations during 1985. Since this time, several expansions and plan modifications have occurred, which are summarized within the approved Mesquite Mine consolidated plan of operations dated October, 1995. According to the Code of Federal Regulations found at Title 43 CFR 3809.1-7, a significant modification of an approved plan must be reviewed and approved by the authorized officer (i.e., BLM) in the same manner as the initial plan. Pursuant to Title 43 CFR 3809.1-7, Newmont has submitted a plan of operations for their proposed mine expansion for approval by the Bureau of Land Management.

This plan modification is now under review by the BLM and other Federal, State and local agencies. The public may review this document at the BLM, El Centro Field Office, 1661 South 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243, or at the Imperial County Planning Department, 939 Main Street, Suite B-1, El Centro, CA 92243.

The expansion would allow the company to continue extracting and processing economical gold deposits, delineated by drilling programs initiated during 1988 and continuing to date. Current ore reserves would be depleted by the end of year 2000, while expansion would increase the mine life a projected seven years into year 2006. The plan modification proposes to process approximately 60 million tons of ore and 180 million tons of waste rock by the expansion of two existing pits: the Big Chief and Rainbow open pits. The pit expansions would encompass approximately 300 acres of Federal, State and private (patented) land, of which 150 acres would be new land disturbance. The plan amendment also describes expansion of an existing heap leach facility on approximately 70 acres of private land to accommodate the new leach material; alternative methods for storage of waste rock, either in existing mined-out open pits, at new or expanded out-of-pit storage areas, or

a combination of both; and construction of ancillary facilities including roads, fencing and drainage diversions.

Dated: December 18, 1998.

**Thomas Zale,**

*Acting Field Manager.*

[FR Doc. 98-34248 Filed 12-24-98; 8:45 am]

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

#### Meeting Notice

**SUMMARY:** The Lower Snake River District Resource Advisory Council will meet in Boise to discuss implementation of standards and guidelines for administering livestock grazing, the 1999 Payette River Recreation Fee Demonstration Project, and other issues.

**DATES:** February 9, 1999. The meeting will begin at 9:00 AM. Public comment periods will be held at 9:30 AM and 4:00 PM.

**ADDRESS:** The meeting will be held at the Lower Snake River District Office, located at 3948 Development Avenue, Boise, Idaho.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Barry Rose, Lower Snake River District Office (208-384-3393).

Dated: December 15, 1998.

**Katherine Kitchell,**

*District Manager.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[NV 910 0777 30]

#### Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council Meeting Location and Time

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management.

**ACTION:** Resource Advisory Councils' meeting location and time.

**SUMMARY:** In accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA), 5 U.S.C., the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Council meetings will be held as indicated below. The agenda for the February 4, 1999 meeting includes: approval of minutes of the previous meeting, Standards and Guidelines for wild horses, pinyon-juniper, mining and recreation, Wilderness Study Areas, 3809 draft mining regulations update,